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BIRCH HILLS LAND USE STUDY

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE

MINISTER - DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND FORESTS

SUBMITTED BY

LAND USE ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE

EDMONTON

OCTOBER 1972

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OBJECTIVE

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BIRCH HILLS LAND USE STUDY

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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BIRCH HILLS LAND USE PLAN

OBJECTIVE

The Birch Hills Land Use Plan was initiated to resolve a question of long standing, i.e. whether the hills should be used for agriculture or some other use. A generally prosperous farming community entirely surrounds the area and considers the hills as the only area of crown land where opportunity for expansion exists. Within the farming community however, considerable difference of opinion exists on the best use of the area.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

The Birch Hills proper is an elevation of land running in a general east-west direction, which rises gradually from the south to an elevation of 2450 feet and forms a north facing escarpment which drops off sharply to 2100 feet elevation. The land to the north is generally level to depressional, while to the south it slopes away very gently for many miles.

Very broadly, the western half of the map sheet consists of lands of good and excellent agricultural quality, while in the eastern half, the lands deteriorate in an easterly direction to the level of dunefields in the south east corner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The accompanying map constitutes the Land Use Assignment Committee's land use proposal. It shows two categories of land: one where no agricultural disposition is recommended and one where some specified form of agriculture is recommended either as a priority or as a lower rated use. The attached Permissive Use Agreement sets out in detail the proposed uses for crown lands only although all lands are included.

The overlay represents the present status of ownership, commitments on crown lands and the location of the Green Zone boundary. The map and overlay together indicate the extent to which present use coincides with recommended use and consequently the requirements to make the necessary changes.

The Committee recommends that:

1. the Birch Hills proper, which form a groundwater recharge area for the surrounding lands, be managed by the Crown.
2. SW28 and SE30-77-1-6 be added to the Green Zone.
3. SE8-77-25-5 be added to the Green Zone in an "O" management unit.
4. S $\frac{1}{2}$ 7, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 8-77-1-6 and SW7, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 11, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 12-77-2-6 be deleted from the Green Zone.
5. lands deleted from the Green Zone on the south side of the Hills not be disposed of until an equivalent amount of land has been revested on the north side.
6. changes from present to recommended use on privately owned lands in the White Zone should largely come about from agricultural extension work aided by the Farm Development Program.
7. changes from present to recommended use on privately owned lands indicated as "No agricultural disposition" or as "required for environment conservation" in both zones are suggested to be made through a program of revestment over time.

Proposed additions to the Green Zone involve crown lands only, while deletions cover both private and crown lands.

The extent of private lands required for environmental conservation is 354 quarter sections or parts of quarter sections. A list of the location of these lands is attached.

LANDS RECOMMENDED FOR REVESTMENT

| Twp. | Rge. | M | |
|------|------|---|--|
| 77 | 24 | 5 | NE20 & N $\frac{1}{2}$ 21 North of River, W $\frac{1}{2}$ 27 West of River Sec. 28, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SE29, SE30, SE32, S $\frac{1}{2}$ & NE33, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SW34 North & West of River N $\frac{1}{2}$ 35 North & West of River |
| 78 | 24 | 5 | SW2 W of River, Sec. 3 W. of River, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SE 4, NE8, Sec. 9, W $\frac{1}{2}$ 10 W. of River, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SW15 W. of River, SW16, SE17, E $\frac{1}{2}$ 21, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SE22, Sec. 23 N. & W. of River, NE25 N. of River, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 26 W. or River, NW27, SE28, N $\frac{1}{2}$ 33, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SW34, N $\frac{1}{2}$ 35, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SE36. |
| 77 | 25 | 5 | S $\frac{1}{2}$ & NW15, E $\frac{1}{2}$ 16. |
| 77 | 26 | 5 | N $\frac{1}{2}$ 17, Sec. 20, W $\frac{1}{2}$ 21, Sec. 29, W $\frac{1}{2}$ 28, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 32, SW33. |
| 78 | 26 | 5 | Sec. 20, N $\frac{1}{2}$ 32 |
| 78 | 1 | 6 | NE24, E $\frac{1}{2}$ 25, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SE36. |
| 77 | 1 | 6 | N $\frac{1}{2}$ 3, N $\frac{1}{2}$ 4, N $\frac{1}{2}$ 12, Sec. 13, Sec. 22, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SW23, Sec. 24, S $\frac{1}{2}$ & NE25, SW26, S $\frac{1}{2}$ & NW27, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SE28, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SW30, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 32, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 33, SW34. |
| 78 | 2 | 6 | N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SW28, SE29, Sec. 33. |
| 77 | 2 | 6 | N $\frac{1}{2}$ 3, N $\frac{1}{2}$ 4, Sec. 7, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 9, NW & SE19, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 20, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 21, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 25, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 26. |
| 77 | 3 | 6 | W $\frac{1}{2}$ 4, NE5, N $\frac{1}{2}$ 7, E $\frac{1}{2}$ 8, Sec. 9, Sec. 10, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SW11, NW12, SE21, Sec. 22, Sec. 23, N $\frac{1}{2}$ 24, NW & SE28, N $\frac{1}{2}$ 29, NE & SW30. |
| 78 | 3 | 6 | NW17, NW18, NW19, W $\frac{1}{2}$ 20, SW26, Sec. 27, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 28, SE30, W $\frac{1}{2}$ 33. |
| 78 | 4 | 6 | NW1, NE2, W $\frac{1}{2}$ 3, Sec. 4, Sec 5, S $\frac{1}{2}$ & NE6, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 8, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SW9, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SE10, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 11, S $\frac{1}{2}$ & NE 12, W $\frac{1}{2}$ 13, S $\frac{1}{2}$ & NE14, E $\frac{1}{2}$ 16, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 21, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SW22, Sec 23, SW & NE24, W $\frac{1}{2}$ 31, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SW32, NW33, NE36. |
| 77 | 4 | 6 | NW4, N $\frac{1}{2}$ 5, Sec 8 & 9, N $\frac{1}{2}$ & SW10, Sec 15 & 16, SE17, NW19, S $\frac{1}{2}$ & NE22, N $\frac{1}{2}$ 23, S $\frac{1}{2}$ & NE25, S $\frac{1}{2}$ 26, N $\frac{1}{2}$ 30, Sec 31, NW32. |
| 77 | 5 | 6 | Sec 3, 10, W $\frac{1}{2}$ 14, S $\frac{1}{2}$ & NE15, SE22, Sec 23, 24, 25, SE26, E $\frac{1}{2}$ 36. |
| 78 | 5 | 6 | E $\frac{1}{2}$ 25, E $\frac{1}{2}$ 34, NW35, SE36. |

PERMISSIVE USE AGREEMENT *
BIRCH HILLS LAND USE PLAN

AUG. 1/72

1. No Agricultural Disposition

All E_b codings

$$\begin{array}{c} W \\ P \\ \hline F \\ W \end{array}$$

Primarily watershed and wildlife habitat protection and recreation use.
 Watershed forestry in consultation with environment, wildlife and recreation.

Primarily ungulate production.
 Watershed forestry in consultation with wildlife.

2. Unimproved Grazing Only

E_rW_dA_gF_wR_e

E_rW_dF_wA_gR_e

Primarily watershed and wildlife habitat protection and recreation.
 Unimproved grazing allowed by license or permit in consultation with environment, wildlife, forestry and recreation.
 Watershed forestry in consultation with environment, wildlife and grazing.

E_dA_g

Unimproved grazing.

E_dW_nR_eA_g

E_dW_nA_g

E_dW_dR_eA_g

Primarily wildlife production.
 Unimproved grazing in consultation with wildlife and recreation.

W_dF_eA_g

W_dR_eF_eA_g

W_dR_eF_eA_g

E_w

Primarily ungulate production.
 Unimproved grazing allowed in consultation with wildlife, forestry, and recreation.

W_pA_gF_e

Primarily wildlife production.
 Unimproved grazing allowed in consultation with wildlife and forestry.

3. Improved Grazing

E_dW_dA_pF_a

Improved grazing in consultation with environment, wildlife and forestry.
 Coniferous timber on crown lands should be integrated in a woodlot program.

$$\begin{matrix} W_d A_p F_a \\ W_d F_a A_p \end{matrix}$$

Primarily ungulate production.
Improved grazing in consultation with wildlife and forestry only where forest cover is light and non-coniferous.
Woodlot forestry in consultation with wildlife.

$$W_d A_p$$

Primarily ungulate production.
Improved grazing in consultation with wildlife.

4. Arable Agriculture

$$\frac{A_a}{W_d}, \frac{A_a}{E_w W_d}, \frac{A_a W_d}{E_w}$$

Primarily arable agriculture.
Limited remaining natural cover should be retained wherever requested by wildlife and along watercourses in consultation with environment.

$$A_a, \frac{A_a}{E_w}$$

Arable agriculture.

$$A_a W_d$$

Primarily arable agriculture.
Limited remaining natural cover should be retained wherever requested by wildlife.

$$\frac{A_a}{E_s W_d R_e}$$

Primarily arable agriculture.
Along the shorelines of the lakes primarily waterfowl production and recreation.

* SEE APPENDIX FOR EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS

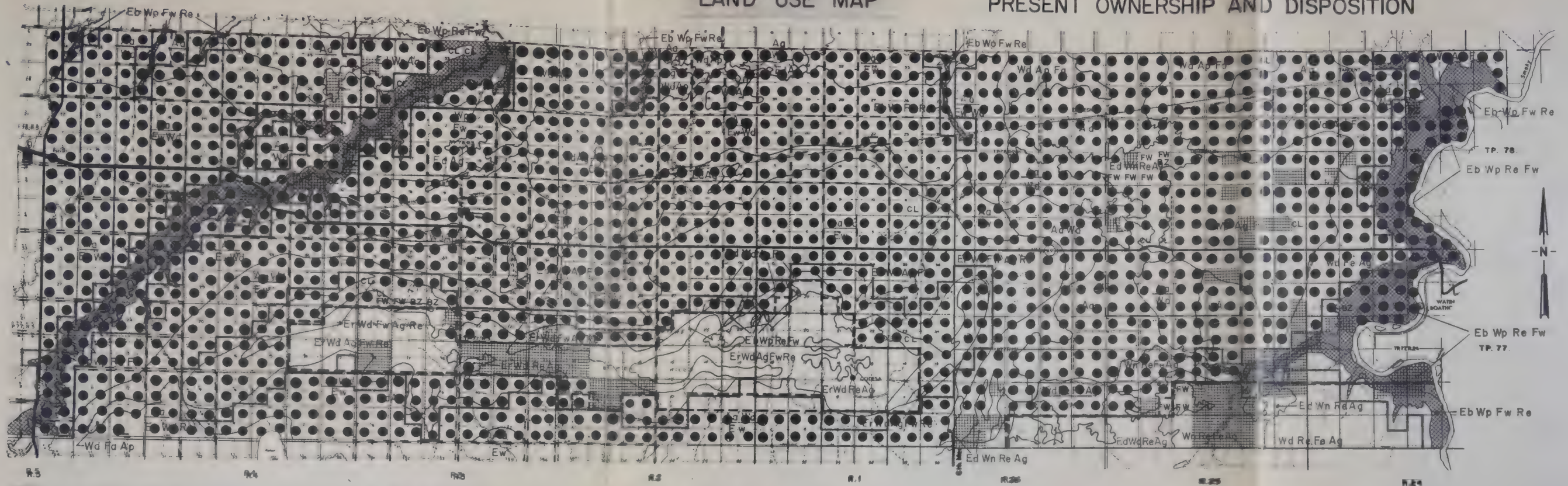
APPENDIX

| <u>AGRICULTURE</u> | | <u>FORESTRY</u> | |
|--------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| A _a | arable agriculture | F _t | timber production |
| A _p | improved grazing | F _a | woodlot purposes |
| A _g | unimproved grazing | F _w | watershed purposes |
| | | F _e | erosion control purposes |
| <u>WILDLIFE</u> | | <u>RECREATION</u> | |
| W _p | prime habitat | R _i | intensive |
| W _d | dispersal area | R _e | extensive |
| W _n | nesting area | R _n | area to be left alone no use allocation |
| W _s | staging area | R _s | special stie e.g. historic site |
| W _f | fisheries | R _c | recreation corridor |
| W _m | miscellaneous interests e.g. research projects | | |
| <u>ENVIRONMENT</u> | | | |
| E _h | headwaterlands | | |
| E _b | riverbreaks | | |
| E _w | watercourses | | |
| E _s | shorelands | | |
| E _r | recharge area | | |
| E _d | discharge area | | |

The land use coding system lists specific uses in order of priority. Symbols in the numerator refer to the total area, while those in the denominator indicate specific uses on parts of the area. For example, $\frac{F_t W_d R_e}{E_w}$ stands for production forestry integrated with wildlife, recreation and environment interests. The latter are focused on parts of the area, namely the watercourses occuring within it.

BIRCH HILLS LAND USE MAP

PRESENT OWNERSHIP AND DISPOSITION



NOTE:
This map is comprised of portions of
Alberta Base Maps 83W 4E and
83W 4W. Therefore all symbology
is standard for Alberta Base Maps.

W. of 6th Mer.

SCALE 1" = 2 MILES

W. of 5th Mer.

AGRICULTURE

- A_a ARABLE
- A_p IMPROVED GRAZING
- A_g UNIMPROVED GRAZING

ENVIRONMENT

- E_h HEADWATERLANDS
- E_b RIVERBREAKS
- E_w WATERCOURSES
- E_s SHORELANDS
- E_r RECHARGE AREA
- E_d DISCHARGE AREA

FORESTRY

- F_t TIMBER
- F_a WOODLOT
- F_w WATERSHED
- F_e EROSION CONTROL

RECREATION

- R_i INTENSIVE
- R_e EXTENSIVE
- R_n AREA TO BE LEFT ALONE
- R_s SPECIAL SITE
- R_c RECREATION CORRIDOR

WILDLIFE

- W_p PRIME HABITAT
- W_d DISPERSAL AREA
- W_n NESTING
- W_s STAGING
- W_f FISHERIES
- W_m MISCELLANEOUS INTERESTS

RECOMMENDED USE OF CROWN LANDS

- AGRICULTURAL DISPOSITION AS SPECIFIED IN THE PERMITTED USE AGREEMENT
- NO AGRICULTURAL DISPOSITIONS
- LANDS REQUIRED FOR ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION
- PROPOSED GREEN ZONE

- PATENTED LAND
- GRAZING LEASE AND PERMIT
- CULTIVATION LEASE
- FISH AND WILDLIFE RESERVATION
- BROWN ZONE RESERVATION
- PRESENT GREEN ZONE BOUNDARY



LAND USE ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE

map prepared by
Land Use Assignment Branch

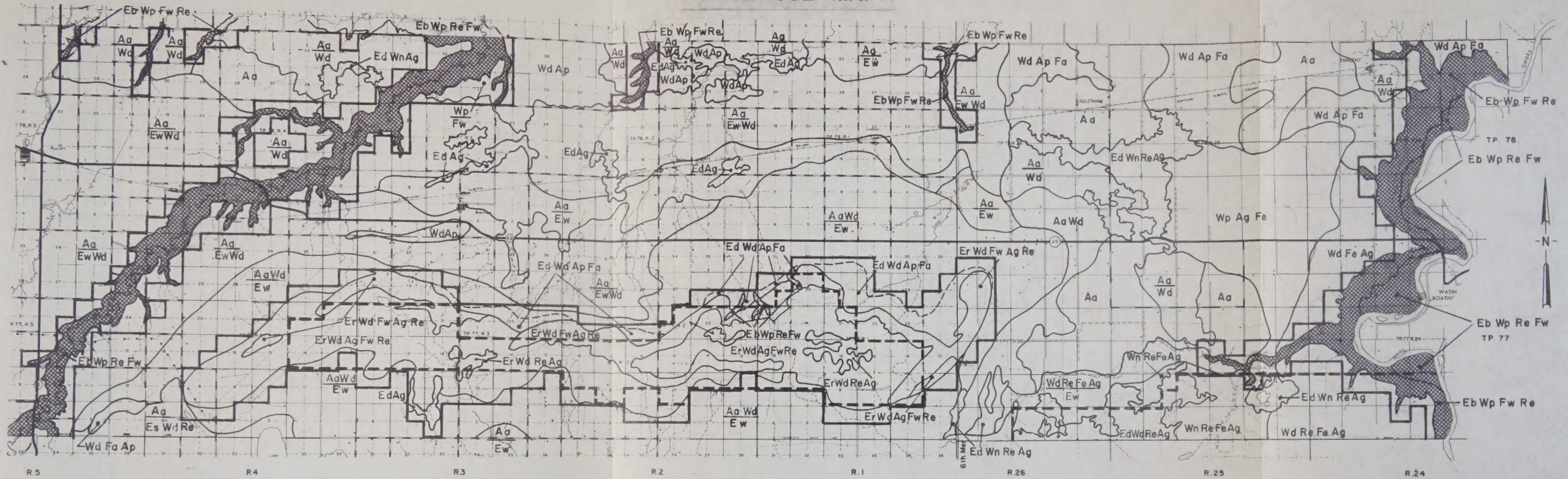
Technical Division

Department of Lands and Forests

Recommended by _____
CHAIRMAN, L.U.A.C.

Approved by _____

BIRCH HILLS LAND USE MAP



NOTE:

This map is comprised of portions of
Alberta Base Maps 83M N.E. and
83N N.W.. Therefore all symbolization
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W. of 6th. Mer.

W. of 5th. Mer.

AGRICULTURE

- A_a ARABLE
- A_p IMPROVED GRAZING
- A_g UNIMPROVED GRAZING

ENVIRONMENT

- E_h HEADWATERLANDS
- E_b RIVERBREAKS
- E_w WATERCOURSES
- E_s SHORELANDS
- E_r RECHARGE AREA
- E_d DISCHARGE AREA

FORESTRY

- F_t TIMBER
- F_a WOODLOT
- F_w WATERSHED
- F_e EROSION CONTROL

RECREATION

- R_i INTENSIVE
- R_e EXTENSIVE
- R_n AREA TO BE LEFT ALONE
- R_s SPECIAL SITE
- R_c RECREATION CORRIDOR

WILDLIFE

- W_p PRIME HABITAT
- W_d DISPERSAL AREA
- W_n NESTING
- W_s STAGING
- W_f FISHERIES
- W_m MISCELLANEOUS INTERESTS

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- AGRICULTURAL DISPOSITION AS SPECIFIED
IN THE PERMITTED USE AGREEMENT
- NO AGRICULTURAL DISPOSITIONS
- LANDS REQUIRED FOR ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION
- PROPOSED GREEN ZONE



LAND USE ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE

map prepared by
Land Use Assignment Branch

Technical Division
Department of Lands and Forests

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Recommended by | CHAIRMAN, L.U.A.C. |
| Approved by | |

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